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The Unintended Consequences of Border Politics

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The Unintended Consequences of Border Politics

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Dedication

To my wife for putting up with me during this process.

Abstract

The Unintended Consequences of Border Politics

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2010

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This report explores the reasons why the Pakistan tribal areas have become a haven and hotbed of radicalism and the steps being taken to reestablish control and to promote peace and stability in the region. It begins with a brief overview of the recent history (1893 to Partition) of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, followed by the political and cultural ramifications in the area due to the creation of Pakistan. Religion, tribal customs, socio-economic development and the unique political relationship between the FATA and the central government must be considered when forming policy recommendations and planning future engagements. The article concludes with an examination of recent initiatives by the U.S. and Pakistan to pacify the area, to include short term and long term strategies, and describes the ramifications of failure.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the failure of the Taliban to meet US demands for handing over the al- Qaeda members responsible for the attacks, U.S. and British forces began Operation Enduring Freedom by launching an aerial bombing campaign in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. These bombing missions targeted Taliban and al-Qaida forces in the capital, Kabul, at the airport and military nerve-centre of Kandahar, home of the Taliban's Supreme Leader Mullah Omar, and also numerous military/terrorist training camps in the city of Jalalabad. With the help of United Front (Northern Alliance) forces under the command of Generals Mohammed Fahim, Dostum, and Mohammed Atta in the north, Ismael Khan in the west, Karim Khalili in the Hazarajat, and Hamid Karzai in the south, “approximately 100 Central Intelligence Agency Officers and 350 U.S. Special Forces soldiers overthrew the Taliban regime in less than three months.”¹ Defeated militarily, numerous Taliban and al-Qaeda forces were driven into exile in the mountainous Afghanistan/Pakistan border region. Unfortunately for Afghan and Coalition forces, “thousands of Taliban fighters and virtually the entire intact Taliban senior leadership shura (religious council) have found sanctuary in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) at the center of the

¹ Seth G. Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad”, *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008): 7

border, as well as in parts of the Pakistani province of Baluchistan to the west and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) to the east and south”. “These areas coincide almost exactly with the area of Pakistan overwhelmingly dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group.”² Over the last nine years, these areas (especially the FATA and NWFP) have become increasingly unstable, both politically and militarily, as they have become havens for terrorists and extremist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban, threatening the very stability of Pakistan – a vital U.S. ally in the global struggle against terrorism. Instability in Pakistan’s FATA and NWFP threatens NATO’s strategic Khyber Pass lifeline to Afghanistan, where 37,000 U.S. troops seek to contain an expanding Taliban insurgency. The implications of allowing these safe havens to thrive are not lost on either the U.S. or Pakistan, especially as the two nations continue to refine their strategic partnership with respect to the war in Afghanistan and overall regional stability. A joint effort by the United States and Pakistan to stabilize Afghanistan and the frontier areas once and for all will ultimately deny sanctuary for transnational militants, such as al-Qaeda, that have thrived off of instability and foreign occupation across the Durand Line.

This report explores the reasons why the Pakistan tribal areas have become a haven and hotbed of radicalism and the steps being taken to reestablish control and to promote peace and stability in the region. It begins with a brief overview of the recent history (1893 to Partition) of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, followed by the political and cultural ramifications in the area due to the creation of Pakistan. An understanding of

² Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier”, *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008): 42

the interaction between the settled areas and tribes of the NWFP, the British Raj and the competing visions of the All India Congress and the All India Muslim League during the partition process is critical to the subsequent discussion of the current instability and the road ahead. Religion, tribal customs, socio-economic development and the unique political relationship between the FATA and the central government must be considered when forming policy recommendations and planning future engagements. The article concludes with an examination of recent initiatives by the U.S. and Pakistan to pacify the area, to include short term and long term counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies, and describes the ramifications if efforts are unsuccessful to mitigate the immediate threat of these safe havens, but also to provide regional stability in an increasingly important strategic region of the world.

Chapter Two

The Durand Line and Afghan Intrigue

First demarcated in 1893 by British diplomat Sir Mortimer Durand, the northwest frontier was created when the “Durand Line” imposed a border between the tribal Pashtun (Pathan) communities of modern Afghanistan and Pakistan. “This was the period when the ‘Great Game’ between Russia and Great Britain was at its peak and the boundaries of the modern world were being defined.” Between 1895-96, the Malakand, Waziristan (North and South), Khaibar, Kurram agencies were formed and, with the exception of Malakand, were placed under the administrative control of the Government of Punjab while Malakand remained under direct control of the Central Government of India.³ The establishment of the Malakand Agency provided access to the Dir, Swat and Chitral tribal areas, regions that prior to this had never been seen by any Englishman. However, this exploration and expansion by the British did not sit well with many of the tribes. “The demarcation of the Durand Line with its accompanying definition of spheres of influence, the setting up of the five Political Agencies, and, finally, the passage of troops in tracts which were not only strategically important, but the most fertile portions of the land – all this was regarded as a deliberate menace to a long-cherished independence.”⁴ In response to this perceived menace, the tribes of the Malakand rose

³ Brigadier Sohail Masood Alvi, *FATA: Beginning of a New Era* (Lahore: Printhouse, 2006), 25, and quoted by Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans: 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957* (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1958), 382-388. The decision to leave the Malakand Agency under Central Government rule was due to the existence of both “settled districts” and tribal areas where one indiscrete political move could embroil India and possibly London in a conflict.

⁴ Caroe, 1958, pp. 387

against the British in June 1897. By August, the violence had spread to Mohmand country, Orakzai Tirah, the Kaibar posts, the Samana forts, and the Kurram were threatened.⁵ By the spring of 1898, peace was restored, the Khaiber pass was reoccupied, and numerous previously hidden glens and valleys were revealed. The process of expansion into the tribal areas, the subsequent uprising and the magnitude of the effort required to restore order to the area led to a British reevaluation of its administrative procedures.

The reassessment resulted in the Viceroy Lord Curzon creating a new administrative unit in 1901, the North-West Frontier Province, by carving out parts of the then Punjab province and adding certain tribal principalities. “The province included five ‘settled’ districts (Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Hazara, Kohat and Peshawar) and five tribal agencies (Dir-Swat-Chitral, Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan and South Waziristan), and was placed under the administrative authority of a chief commissioner reporting to the Governor-General of India.”⁶ That same year, the British issued a new “Frontier Crimes Regulation that expanded the scope of earlier regulations and awarded wide powers, including judicial authority, to administrative officials”; this legal system is still in effect today.⁷

Lord Curzon appointed Harold Deane, the builder of the Malakand Agency, as the first Chief Commissioner of the newly established NWFP. Deane governed for seven

⁵ Ibid., pp. 387.

⁶ Government of Pakistan, FATA website, 2010

⁷ Ibid.

years (1902-1908) and the province enjoyed relative peace and stability. Deane's successor, Sir George Olaf Roos-Keppl (1908-1919), also enjoyed a remarkably peaceful stint as Chief Commissioner during most of his tenure, only having to send out two expeditions at the start of his tour and one more to Waziristan in 1917.⁸ This was a remarkable accomplishment considering (neutral) Afghanistan was receiving considerable pressure from the Ottoman Empire to instigate a jihad against the Allies. It wasn't until after 1919, when WWI was over, that the Frontier erupted into warfare and Roos-Keppl found the NWFP invaded and in rebellion.

After the assassination of the Afghan Amir Habibullah, a power struggle erupted over succession between his brother Nasrullah Khan and Amanullah, Habibullah's third son. –Amanullah seized the throne and had Nasrullah arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for his father's murder. To help solidify his position with the Afghan Army and anti-British factions within Afghanistan, Amanullah rushed troops to the border in a show of support to Indians following anti-British riots in the Punjab. On 3 May 1919, Afghan forces crossed the frontier at the western end of the Khyber Pass and captured the town of Bagh. The Afghan forces achieved early success in the conflict as Pashtun tribesmen from both sides of the border either joined the Afghan forces or launched their own military operations along the Frontier. As the British recovered from their initial surprise, they brought to bear their superior military hardware and pushed the Afghan forces back across the border. However, the military situation quickly resulted in a

⁸ Caroe, 1958, pp. 417-418

stalemate, and both sides were soon ready to sue for peace; the Afghans were unwilling to sustain continued British air attacks on Kabul and Jalalabad, and the British were unwilling to take on an Afghan land war so soon after World War I.

On 3 June 1919, a cease fire was agreed to, and the settlement was finally concluded on 8 August 1919 when the Treaty of Rawalpindi was signed.⁹ The result of the peace treaty was mixed for both sides. Afghanistan was granted the right to conduct their own foreign affairs as a fully independent nation, but the British withdrew the subsidy that they were paying the Afghans and denied them the right to import arms from India.¹⁰ The Durand Line was reaffirmed as the political boundary separating Afghanistan from the North-West Frontier, and the Afghans promised not to incite revolt on British side of the line in the tribal areas. Though the treaty ended hostilities between Afghanistan and the British, conflict in Waziristan continued until late 1920, as both the Mahsuds and Wazirs resisted British attempts to reassert control of the agency. Olaf Caroe recounts British efforts to pacify the area and the difficulties faced by Government forces:

The Government's plan was to follow earlier precedents and advance up the Takki Zam Valley to the point where it is joined by the Baddar at Dwa Toi-meaning Watermeet_ and from that centre to dominate the central strongholds of the Mahsuds around Kaniguram and Makin. The advance was opposed by the Mahsuds in full force, aided by a strong contingent of Ahmadzai Wazirs from Wana. The gap between Government and tribal armaments had been greatly narrowed by successful tribal raids, including the looting of th Ean Fort, and full use was made on the tribal side of the

⁹ Armed Conflict Events Database, 2003 and Matthew W. Williams, *The British colonial experience in Waziristan and its applicability to current operations*(Chapter 3), <http://www.supportimrankhan.org/Articles/story.aspx?&id=23> (2008)

¹⁰ Hebert Sidebotham, *The Third Afghan War*, *New Statesman* , 1919

new arms of precision. The battle for the narrows at Ahnai Tangi lasted five days, during which hand-to-hand encounters were frequent, and the Majsuds not only demonstrated great skill in the tactical use of firepower, but probed the new weapons had not affected their traditional valour as swordsmen at close quarters. On arrival at destination, the force sat down to a blockade, resulting in due course and after many vicissitudes in the makin of the peace which led (by negotiation with the Utmanzai Wazirs) to the occupation of the Razmak and the construction of a network of roads over the country.¹¹

This became a recurring pattern throughout British rule during the 1920s as various tribes carried on an unending low intensity conflict. While some of the tribes fought for the preservation of their autonomy, many were encouraged and even aided by Amanullah as he continued shipping arms into the tribal areas. Pressure from Russian incursion finally forced Amanullah to cease his frontier campaign and sign an amended treaty with the British in 1921.

¹¹ Caroe, 1958, 405-406

Chapter Three

Pathan Renaissance

Following the conclusion of the Third Anglo-Afghan War and the confirmation of the Durand Line as an international border in the modern sense, the frontier was much more firmly established and conditions were optimal for accelerated economic and political development. The tenure of George Roos-Keppel (R-K) as Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province was a watershed period for what Olaf Caroe describes as the “Pathan Renaissance”. Portrayed as a Pathan among Pathans, R-K “found an unfailing helper in Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum (A.Q.), his chosen interpreter and at one time almost his second self”. R-K’s strong personality and leadership style inspired loyalty and respect among the Pathans and his vision of provincial progress spread among the tribes. The most visible manifestation of R-K’s vision opened in 1913 when he and A.Q. established the first institute of higher learning in the province, Islamia College, now known as the University of Peshawar. R-K’s cultural immersion, hands-on administrative style, and the new influences set free by the Islamia College had much to do with broadening the horizons of the tribesmen.¹²

R-K’s paternalistic view of what was good for the Pathans limited his ability to truly realize the fruits of his endeavors. As the first steps toward representative institutions were being established in the Punjab with the passage of the Government of India Act of 1919 (also known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms), R-K expressed his

¹² Ibid., 421-438

belief that the Pathan was not prepared for representative government. R-K blocked extension of self-government to the frontier and justified his decisions to resist the move by citing strategic and economic concerns, and that the Pathans had their own democratic methods that were more to their liking. For the first twelve years after 1919, the province's only representation to the central government was through two of its leading citizens; A.Q and Muhammad Akbar Khan of Hoti. ¹³ A.Q. would become the province's first Chief Minister in 1937 and Muhammad Akbar Khan would rise to prominence within the Muslim League. This lack of comprehensive representation left the NWFP standing still in the democratization process while the rest of India moved forward.

While progress toward representative government stalled during this period, British military development programs continued throughout the province, primarily in response to events taking place in Afghanistan. Throughout the 1920s, political instability and fighting in Afghanistan constantly threatened to cross over into the NWFP, even after the conclusion of the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921. As a result of the ever present cross border threat and the near constant rebellion in Waziristan, the British increased infrastructure development in order to meet the danger. New roads were built and existing tracks were improved to provide the Army with the necessary lines of communication. Cantonments were established at Manzai, Razmak, Gardai, and Bannu,

¹³ Ibid., pp. 423-425

manned by brigades of the Waziristan and Razmak Field Forces; order was slowly restored.¹⁴

With the improvement of the transportation network and access to education, socio-economic conditions in the NWFP improved throughout the 1920s. Enhanced irrigation techniques and imported seeds led to heartier and more diverse crops as well as improved pasturage. This in turn led to an increase in the individual farmer's wealth which was spread amongst the rest of the tribe as per Pathan cultural practices. Graduates of Islamia and Edwardes Colleges in Peshawar subsequently filled key posts in the Provincial Services where they spread their influence to a populace outgrowing the constraints of tribalism.¹⁵ But even as the Pathan culture and economy continued to improve, the British remained steadfast in their refusal to allow a measure of representative government. Into this environment of growing political discontent, two brothers emerged to direct the rising tide of Indian nationalism in the NWFP.

¹⁴ TIM MOREMAN, *ARMY IN INDIA & FRONTIER WARFARE 1914-1939*,
[HTTP://WWW.KHYBER.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/041-045/ARMYININDA.SHTML](http://www.khyber.org/publications/041-045/armyininda.shtml)

¹⁵ Caroe, 1958, pp.428-431

Chapter Four

The Beginning of Indian Nationalism in the NWFP

Following the Liberal Party's electoral victory in 1906, a number of legislative and administrative reforms were introduced in British India in an effort to meet the Indian National Congress (INC) demand for 'the system of government obtaining in Self-Governing British Colonies'. The first significant reform was the Government of India Act of 1909 (the Morley-Minto Reforms) which directly introduced the elective principle to Indian legislative council membership and introduced separate electorates for Muslims. Although this act was not as sweeping as the INC wanted, it was the first official step in the process of integrating Indian nationals into the decision making process of their country. Slowed by the British and Indian involvement in World War I (WWI), the reform movement nevertheless continued. Secretary of State for India, Edwin Samuel Montagu informed the British House of Commons on Aug. 20, 1917, that the policy of the British government toward India was thereafter to be one of "increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration...with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire." This new policy and the collaboration with the new Viceroy Lord Chelmsford (governed 1916–21) resulted in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918, of which its main recommendations were embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919.¹⁶

¹⁶ "India." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/285248/India>, 23 Nov. 2010

For Indian nationals, the end of WWI was supposed to be a promising time. Over four Divisions of British Indian soldiers fought during the war, with a human cost of 47,746 Indians reported dead or missing and 65,126 wounded.¹⁷ The number of Indian troops available for deployment in WWI would not have been possible without Afghani Emir Habibullah's declared neutrality; this declaration freed thousands of troops that would otherwise have been garrisoning the frontier. The INC supported the Allied war effort with the expectation of political rewards in accordance with Montagu's 1917 declaration, and was "rewarded" by the passage of the Government of India Act of 1919 (GOI).¹⁸ This Act disappointed nationalist leaders because while it established the system of diarchy and a bicameral legislative parliament for all British India, it did so without the power to restrain the Viceroy's executive powers. The dissatisfaction with the 1919 Act was exacerbated by the passage of the Rowlatt Acts early in 1919. These Acts were the peacetime extensions of the wartime emergency measures passed in 1915 and had been rammed through the Supreme Legislative Council over the unanimous opposition of its Indian members, several of whom, including Jinnah, resigned in protest. Jinnah wrote to Viceroy Lord Chelmsford that the enactment of such autocratic legislation, following the victorious conclusion of a war in which India had so loyally supported Britain, was an unwarranted uprooting of the "fundamental principles of justice" and a gross violation of the "constitutional rights of the people."¹⁹

¹⁷ *Participants from the Indian subcontinent in the First World War*, Memorial Gates Trust, <http://www.mgtrust.org/ind1.htm>, retrieved 12 Nov. 2010

¹⁸ Roberts, 2003, pp 39-40

¹⁹ "India", Encyclopedia Britannica; diarchy is government by two joint rulers

During the interwar years, the emergence of Indian nationalist sentiment in the NWFP was born out of social reform movements and political frustration. In response to the British government's refusal to grant the same political representation to the Pathans that the 1919 GOI Act gave to the rest of British Indians, a new political party emerged in the villages, headed by two men destined to affect the direction of politics beyond the borders of the NWFP. Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his older brother Dr. Khan Sahib came from a well-to-do land-owning family in the Hashtnagar area of the Peshawar district and were commonly referred to as the Khan brothers. Both men rose to prominence in the NWFP nationalist movement of the 1920s, Abdul Ghaffar Khan working from outside the formal political system and Dr. Khan Sahib from within. While the Indian Congress admittedly stood against a communal platform based on religion, Congress' appeal to Muslims was limited to the larger, more cosmopolitan cities. This wasn't the case on the Frontier where the population was overwhelmingly Muslim, and it happened in spite of Congress leaders. Through the efforts of the Khan brothers, the NWFP in time became a political paradox in a national movement that would eventually become polarized along communal lines.²⁰

²⁰ Caroe, 1958, pp.430-433; Encyclopedia Britannica Online: *India; Abdul Ghaffar Khan; Dr. Khan Sahib*; Roberts' chapter five endnotes 15 and 16.

Chapter Five

Congress Ascension in the NWFP

Ghaffar Khan founded the Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God), commonly referred to as the “Red Shirts”, out of the society for reformation of Pashtuns (Anjuman-e-Islah-e-Afghan or ‘The Afghan Jirga’), which he created in the early 1920s. The Jirga movement focused primarily on social reform as a means of improving Pashtun’s civil rights within the British governing system, but it gradually turned into a political movement of great import to the nationalist movement. Ghaffar Khan firmly believed in Gandhi’s nonviolent principles (Satyagraha) and he came to be known as the ‘Frontier Gandhi’. The Khan brother’s friendship with Nehru and Gandhi convinced them that the best way to fight for Pathan equality was an alliance with the only effective political organization of the time, the Indian Congress. In 1929, Ghaffar Khan officially founded the Red Shirt movement among the Pashtuns, and on August 1931, the Khudai Khidmatgar accepted Congress’ offer of help in exchange for their joining Congress in the freedom struggle for India. While Ghaffar Khan worked primarily among the villagers, his brother, Dr. Khan Sahib, became the voice of the Frontier Congress’ political wing.²¹

²¹ Red Shirt movement. (2010). In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved November 23, 2010, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/494519/Red-Shirt-Movement> and Khan, D. M., *The Role of the NWFP in the Freedom Struggle* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 2000), 32-35.

While Ghaffar Khan espoused nonviolence among his followers, frequent clashes between the Red Shirts and the government led to the organization being outlawed in December 1931 and to the arrest, imprisonment and exile of both brothers. While the Khan brothers agitated for political equality in the NWFP, events at the center would ultimately provide the desired inroads to a representative government. Between 1930 and 1932, the British government held a series of three meetings to consider the future constitution of India; these became known as the Round Table Conference. The conference resulted from a review in 1927 by the Simon Commission of the Government of India Act of 1919; the Commission published its report in 1930. The first session occurred from November 12, 1930 through January 19, 1931, and included 73 representatives, from all Indian states and all parties except the Indian National Congress. The second session occurred from September to December, 1931, and this time, Mahatma Gandhi attended as the Congress representative. The third and final session occurred from November 17 to December 24, 1932 with neither the Congress nor the British Labor Party attending. The principal achievements of the conference were an insistence on parliamentarianism, the establishment of provincial autonomy, the outline of a federal system and dominion status as the goal of constitutional development. Even though the conference failed to reach agreement, either constitutionally or on communal representation, it resulted in the Government of India Act of 1935. Both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League opposed the Act, and opposition from rulers of the princely states effectively nullified the parts of the Act intended to establish the

Federation of India. Despite Congress and League opposition, provincial elections under stipulations of the Act were held during the winter 1936-37.²²

The continued agitation for political advance in the North-West Frontier Province coupled with the recommendations from the Round Table conference led to the NWFP being raised to the status of a governor's province in 1932. Sir Ralph Griffith became the first appointed Governor and the NWFP had its own Legislative Council. However, tribal policy remained under the central control of the Governor. The rise in administrative status enabled the NWFP to fully participate in the political environment created by the 1935 GOI Act, which gave all provinces full representative and elective governments which were chosen by direct election.

Though Congress was still technically illegal, the Governor allowed it in November 1934 to contest the province's central legislative assembly seat, which had become elective that year. Khan Sahib was nominated for and decisively won the seat and he was allowed to return to the frontier in May 1935. In 1937 Congress finally agreed to participate in the government of the newly autonomous province, but it was the independent candidate and loyal former R-K assistant Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum (AQ) who was elected as the province's first Chief Minister. However, AQ only held office for six months before the Frontier Congress ousted his ministry in a vote of no confidence and Khan Sahib became chief minister. This event shocked most of the Frontier political elite who were opposed to Congress and energized provincial Muslims to reach out to the All India Muslim

²² "India", Encyclopedia Britannica Online and Government of India Act 1935, 1 June 2003. 27 November 2010 <<http://www.storyofpakistan.com/articletext.asp?artid=A041>>

League for help. The Muslim League remained unorganized and ineffective in the NWFP until 1940, but the 1937 political high handedness of the Frontier Congress marked the beginning of the end of its status as the province's hegemonic political representative.²³

²³ Khan, "The Role of the NWFP in the Freedom Struggle", 88-96

Chapter Six

Rise of the Muslim League

As the communal divide widened between the Muslim League and the Congress, the relationship between the Frontier Congress and the majority Muslim population began to change. Initially born out of political necessity, the increased rhetoric of the Congress as the representative of all, regardless of religion, did not sit well with the Pathan, who never regarded himself as an Indian. This sentiment became all the more evident following the September 3, 1939 proclamation by the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow that India was at war with Germany. The proclamation, made without the consultation of the Congress leadership, enraged Nehru and Gandhi. In response to the proclamation, Congress demanded that the British government articulate its postwar goals for Indian independence. Rather than bow to Congress pressure, Linlithgow and Secretary of State Lord Zetland refused the demands, citing the successful prosecution of the war as the Government's primary concern. As a result of Linlithgow's actions, the Congress leadership resigned from local government councils.²⁴

Sensing an opportune time to firmly establish the Muslim League as the more reliable governing partner of the British, Jinnah proclaimed December 22, 1939, a Muslim "Day of Deliverance" from the tyranny of the Congress "Raj." At the annual Muslim League session at Lahore in 1940, Jinnah set forth what became known as the Lahore Resolution, demanding the division of India along communal lines and the

²⁴ "India", Encyclopedia Britannica; Caroe, 433-434; Roberts, 71. Congress' resignation from the government councils was the first step in the estrangement of the British Raj and the Congress leadership.

creation of Pakistan. The idea of Pakistan had been around since the early 1930s, but found very little traction on a national scale. However, given the political opportunities afforded by Congress' decision to quit the government, Jinnah's demand for Pakistan took hold and the Muslim League began to increase its power base.²⁵

Congress' intransigence and the League's demand for Pakistan forced the British Government to further define India's future in order to promote cooperation towards the war effort. On August 8, 1940 Viceroy Linlithgow issued "The August Offer". This offer invited a certain number of representative Indians to join the Executive Council, and established "a War Advisory Council, which would meet at regular intervals and which would contain representatives of the Indian States, and of other interests in the national life of India as a whole." The intent of the offer was to assure both Congress and the League that Britain understood their desires, but that further substantive discussion must be postponed until the successful completion of the war. The Congress leadership was incensed that further discussion would be postponed and acted accordingly. "Gandhi launched his first "individual satyagraha" campaign against the war in October 1940. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the next to openly disobey British law, was sentenced to four years behind bars. By June 1941 more than 20,000 Congress satyagrahis were in prisons." While Congress was actively engaging in its campaign of noncooperation, Jinnah made the most of the power vacuum by assuring the Viceroy that India's Muslims supported the war effort. This fact was not lost on the British, especially considering that

²⁵ Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 55-61;

Muslims made up 37% of the Indian Army, and League cooperation continued throughout World War II.²⁶

Continued British military setbacks in Europe and North Africa and Japanese entry into the war in 1941 caused much anxiety in India. The rapidity with which Japanese forces marched through South East Asia and the possibility of a Japanese invasion of India aroused heightened aspirations of independence in Congress. As Indian public support waned with each British military defeat and fearing a mass revolt, Prime Minister Churchill was forced to reexamine his government's position on Indian independence in an effort to get India completely behind the prosecution of the war. This reexamination of policy resulted in the dispatch of Sir Stafford Cripps to India in an effort to reach a political solution acceptable to all parties in return for war support. The Cripps Mission offered India an elected assembly to frame a constitution and full Dominion status at the end of the war, and the option to secede from the Commonwealth if desired. The offer also presented certain provinces and states the option of dominion status independent of the union.²⁷

The Cripps Mission ended in failure. Congress rejected the offer, specifically attacking Britain's refusal to grant immediate concessions, continued British hegemony over defense, and the proposal of provincial independence for Muslims. Congress wanted

²⁶ "India", Encyclopedia Britannica; *August Offer regarding India's constitution, of His Majesty's Government 8 August 1940*, http://www.houseofdauid.ca/in_a_off.htm; Note by Major-General Lockhart, 23February 1942, in Nicholas Mansergh, E.W.R. Lumby, and Penderel Moon, eds, *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power, 1942-47*, vol. I (London, 1970-83), p. 238 (henceforth *TP*, VII, and so on; all references are to page numbers)

²⁷ *TP*, VI, p. xiii-xiv

immediate independence and viewed the provincial opt out measure as giving too much to the Muslim League, possibly allowing for the “Balkanization” of India. However, Jinnah and the Muslim league emerged from the failure of the mission better off than when they began. Although Jinnah regretted the breakdown in negotiations, he was left with the conditional offer of Pakistan and the respect of the British government as a team player.²⁸

²⁸ TP, VI/587; Cunningham to Linlithgow, NWFP Governor’s report No.8, 23 April 1942, VI/673, p. 833

Chapter Seven

The Political Anomaly

Conditions in the NWFP remained relatively calm following Congress' abdication from office and the assumption of Governor's rule. Muslim opinion in the province was "solidly anti-Japanese" and the conduct of the war held more sway than the political maneuverings of Congress. Of greatest concern to Governor Cunningham and the External Affairs Department during this time was Afghanistan's reaction to the likelihood of independence and possible partition of India. In 1940, Afghanistan indicated its desire to reabsorb the tribal areas, reiterated a demand for direct access to the sea through Baluchistan and to their inclusion in any decision to grant independence to India. The Afghan government reminded the British that current treaties were between their two governments, not India, and that any settlement that didn't guarantee the rights of Muslims in the NWFP would lead to a change in Afghan policy. These demands coupled with the prospect of losing Afghanistan and the NWFP as a buffer zone against Soviet incursion further hardened British resolve to transfer power to a stable government while preserving Britain's strategic influence in the region.²⁹

For the inhabitants of the NWFP, the failure of the Cripps Mission was a disappointment, and most blamed Congress for the breakdown. At the same time, the people were more concerned with the war situation than with constitutional advance, especially in the tribal areas where loyalty to the British among the Pathans remained high,

²⁹ Linlithgow to Amery, Telegram, MSS EUR F. 122/25, 3 March 1942, TP VI/224-225, p. 306-308

according to the local administration. Cunningham reported that in his opinion, “in this Province interest in politics is probably confined to fewer persons than elsewhere in India,” and the failure of the Cripps Mission became old news. Given the mood of the general population and the weakened position of the Frontier Congress, the Congress “Quit India” resolution of August 8, 1942 met with little enthusiasm in the NWFP.³⁰

Once the “Quit India” resolution went into effect, a renewed campaign of civil disobedience ensued. The British government viewed such actions as detrimental to the war effort and subsequently imprisoned most of the key leaders of the party, including Gandhi and Nehru. However, at the insistence of Cunningham, the Khan brothers initially remained free and the direct effects of the movement were mitigated by government propaganda and by the fact that the Province was in section 93 status. In the opinion of Cunningham, “there is no general sympathy on the part of the public with the aims of Congress, who have been losing ground steadily in this Province for some time. There is particular little sympathy with the attitude they have adopted with regard to the war.” This sentiment and the August 20, 1942 Resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee condemning Congress’ actions went far in bolstering Muslim League acceptability in the NWFP.³¹

³⁰ Cunningham to Linlithgow, NWFP Governor’s report No.8, 23 April 1942, TP VI/673, p. 832 and Telegram, MSS EUR F. 125/110, 4 May 1942, TP VII/14.

³¹ Cunningham to Linlithgow, 25 July 1942, VII/326, p. 458; Muslim League Working Committee Resolution, VII/598, p. 771-774; Cunningham to Linlithgow, MSS EUR F. 122/77, 28 September 1942, VIII/43, p. 55-56; Cunningham to Linlithgow, NWFP Governor’s report No.21, 09 November 1942, TP III/146, p. 222-223; Ghaffer Khan was arrested on October 27, 1942. Section 93 is Governor’s rule with no Minister

In the wake of waning support for the Red Shirt Movement and the Frontier Congress in general, by early 1943 the Muslim League was able to secure a very narrow majority in the Provincial legislature. As a result, Cunningham asked Aurangzeb Khan of the League to form a provincial government, ending section 93 status for the Province.³² This was a promising time for the League in the NWFP; all the elements were present for the Frontier League to firmly establish itself as the leading political organization in the 94% Muslim Province. The new Viceroy, Lord Wavell was busy trying to mitigate the effects of famine in Bengal, the tribes were relatively peaceful, the League won all four of the bye election seats in the August 1943 provincial elections, and Gandhi made overtures to Jinnah over the partial concession of Pakistan. Unfortunately, the League ministry earned a reputation for blatant corruption and mismanagement. Even Cunningham spoke against the ministry for having “far less sense of duty to the public than their Congress predecessors had”.³³

As Aurangzeb Khan’s ministry proceeded on its downward spiral, Jinnah continued to strengthen the position of the League as the “sole representative” of Muslim interests throughout the other provinces. League success in the NWFP continued to prove elusive; the current League government’s corruption and Pakistan’s lack of appeal to the average Pashtun did more to dissuade interest in the League than any actions taken by Congress. By March 1945, Aurangzeb Khan’s ministry was voted out and the Frontier

³² Cunningham to Linlithgow, NWFP Governor’s report No.10, 24 May 1943, VIII/730, p. 1006

³³ TP IV, p. xii; Cunningham to Linlithgow, NWFP Governor’s report No.16, 24 August 1943, TP IV/89, p. 186-187; Cunningham to Wavell, 9 February 1943, TP IV/366, p. 708.

Congress party was returned to office under Khan Sahib. As Khan Sahib returned to office, rumors persisted that he had given no assurance to support the war effort, placing himself at odds with Cunningham and British policy. Khan Sahib quelled these rumors in word by publically declaring that the media intentionally misrepresented his intentions and in deed by “present with Cunningham at the saluting base when he took the salute at the V-Day parade.”³⁴

National elections held in the winter of 1945–46 demonstrated how effective Jinnah’s Pakistan strategy had been; the league won all 30 seats reserved for Muslims in the Central Legislative Assembly and 412 of the 482 reserved Muslim seats. While Congress successfully won most of the general electorate seats, it clearly could not claim to speak for the entire population of British India. But the news was not all good for the League as it yet again failed to make inroads in the NWFP. Despite personal appearances by Jinnah and the continued cry of Pakistan, the Muslim league had been “unduly optimistic as to the result of the election.” Cunningham attributed the League’s poor showing to their “bad organization and internal faction-feeling.” Additionally, while the Pakistan strategy worked well in other provinces, it was “not really an intelligible war cry to 90% of the hearers. To the average Pashtun villager in those parts, the suggestion that there can be such a thing as Hindu domination was laughable”. In the NWFP, communal

³⁴ Wavell to Amery, 13 March 1945, TP V/310, p. 680 and 20 March 1945 TP V/327, p. 712; War Cabinet Paper W.P. (45) 218, TP V/374, p. 831. Congress allowed Khan Sahib to sit for office as it seemed to be in best interest of the province. Deposition of League Government in NWFP should not be taken as a national trend. Sir J. Colville to Amery, 30 May 1945, TP V/471, p. 1071.

troubles were not yet an issue and Congress was just as much a Muslim party as the League.³⁵

³⁵ Agenda, Memoranda and Minutes of Governor's conference, 1-2 August 1945, TP VI/2, p. 10-23; Cunningham to Wavell, 9 October 1945, TP VI/134, p. 318-319 and 27 February 1946, TP VI/479, p. 1085; Wavell to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, 16 October 1945, TP VI/146, p. 349.

Chapter Eight

Failure of the Cabinet Mission

In yet another attempt to reconcile the Indian political parties and the British goal of transferring power to a single Indian administration, the home government sent a Cabinet Mission to India in March 1946. The Mission devised what came to be known as the Plan of May 16 which proposed the following:

1. India would be given independence and Dominion status in the Commonwealth
2. Creation of a three-tier federation for India with a central government of limited powers
3. The subcontinent divided into three major groups of provinces:
4. Group A: Bombay Presidency, Madras, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, and the Central Provinces
5. Group B: Punjab, Sind, the North-West Frontier, and Balochistan
6. Group C: Bengal and Assam.
7. Local provincial governments were to have the choice of opting out of the group in which they found themselves should a majority of their populace vote to do so

While rejecting Pakistan as an impracticality based on economic and strategic implications, the plan catered to Muslim fears of Hindu domination by allocating the provinces so that Muslims held a slim majority in two of the three groupings. This organization allowed parity at the center by requiring a majority vote from representatives of both communities on questions of communal interest.³⁶

Initially, the plan was grudgingly accepted by both parties. However, on July 10 1946, Nehru gave a speech which essentially repudiated Congress' commitment to adhere

³⁶ Statement by the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy, 25 May 1946, *TP* VII/376, pp. 688–689, and, 16 June 1946, *TP*, VII/550, pp. 954–955; Note by Government of India, External Affairs Dept, The Tribes of the Northwest and Northeast Frontier in a future Constitution, March 1946, *TP* VII/15, p. 30-32;

to the plan and wanted the constitution to allow for changes in the groupings. This speech signaled the end of any chance of compromise between Congress and the League. Jinnah hardened his stance on the creation of Pakistan, withdrew his acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and refused to join the interim. Jinnah's call for "Direct Action Day in Calcutta on 16 August sparked the worst communal violence to date. The violence spread to other provinces and even threatened to erupt in the NWFP. Despite repeated attempts by Lord Wavell to bring the League back to the negotiating table, Jinnah refused and declared that nothing less than Pakistan would suffice.³⁷

While communal violence was far less prevalent in the NWFP, it was nonetheless a constant fear of Cunningham and his replacement Sir Olaf Caroe. Although the League failed to make major political inroads during the 1946 election, Congress' support was beginning to wane. Recognizing that the NWFP would make up a major part of what would become Pakistan, the Frontier League increased their recruitment efforts and calls for Muslim unity. Ironically, the best recruiter the League had was Jawaharlal Nehru himself. Against the wishes of Wavell and Caroe, Nehru toured the province in mid-October of 1946 and met with unexpected hostility. Hostilities erupted against Nehru as soon as he debarked in Pashawar and continued throughout his entire visit, and on more than one occasion, Nehru's very life was threatened. He intended for his visit to put an

³⁷ Full Version of Pandit Nehru's Press Conference of 10 July 1946, *TP*, VIII/16, pp. 25–27

end to the two nation theory, but what he ended up with was the polarization of the NWFP along communal lines.³⁸

³⁸ Caroe to Wavell, 29 September 1949, TP VIII/382, p. 626 and 15 October 1946, TP VIII/459, p.730; Wavell to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, 9 October 1946, TP VIII/422, p. 685; Note by Wavell, Wavell Papers, Political Series, June-December 1946, TP VIII/490, p. 763.

Chapter Nine

The Arrival of Mountbatten and the Transfer of Power

Lord Mountbatten replaced Lord Wavell as the last Viceroy of India in March 22, 1947. Prime Minister Atlee charged Mountbatten with the unenviable task of finalizing the transfer of power to Indian hands and permitting a bloodless British withdrawal no later than June 1948. Mountbatten tried to persuade Jinnah to remove his demand for a separate Pakistan and keep India united. Mountbatten spent considerable time and effort explaining to Jinnah the pragmatic impracticalities of establishing a separate nation. Outlining the costs associated with keeping the tribes in line, the fact that the armed forces would be incapable of quelling any major outbreak of unrest, and the strategically untenable position of building a military industrial complex from scratch, did not dissuade Jinnah. Logically pointing out that the creation of a new state would not solve the communal issue as there would still be sizeable minority populations within both states had no effect either. Mountbatten even commented that he “would not have thought it possible that a man with a complete lack of administrative knowledge or sense of responsibility could achieve or hold down so powerful a position.”³⁹

Communal violence continued to escalate in the NWFP, as Congress administrators countered League protests and demonstrations by purportedly committing abuses by official means. Caroe reported that half of Rawalpindi had burned and that the administration was nearing the breaking point. The situation in the settled districts eroded

³⁹ “A Few Questions That the Viceroy Might Ask Mr. Jinnah Regarding Pakistan,” *TP*, X/64, pp. 100–101; Viceroy’s Personal Report No. 3, 17 April 1947, *TP*, X/165, p. 301.

rapidly as League Green Shirts and Congress Red Shirts demonstrated in opposing masses, Caroe continued to worry that the tribes would decide to take advantage of the situation and raid. As the violence got worse, Caroe and Khan Sahib's professional relationship deteriorated.⁴⁰

In an effort to diffuse communal tensions in the NWFP and the Punjab, Mountbatten decided to personally tour the areas "to take the temperature of his two most troubled provinces." On April 21, 1947, a crowd of tens of thousands met Mountbatten and his wife at the Peshawar airport and the scene was extremely tense. The Pathans had gathered in numbers as a sign of strength and as a sign that Ghaffar Khan and the Congress leadership were no longer in charge. One wrong statement by the Viceroy would have sent the crowd into fits and turned the gathering into a bloodbath. In a brave display of leadership, Mountbatten and his wife climbed a railroad embankment and waved to the crowd. In a stroke of luck, Mountbatten happened to be wearing a green bush jacket and the crowd took that as a gesture of solidarity. Mountbatten won over the crowd and was rewarded by shouts of "Mountbatten" Zindabad!" Forty-eight hours later, the Mounbattens toured the Punjab and witnessed first hand the aftermath of the communal violence.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Caroe to Mountbatten, 22 March 1947, Governor's Reports, TP X/I; Caroe to Mountbatten, 31 March 1947, *ITOP*, X/41, p. 61; Mountbatten to Pethick-Lawrence, 9 April 1947, *ITOP*, X/107, p. 166; Minutes of the Viceroy's Third Miscellaneous Meeting (Situation in the N.W.F.P.), 16 April 1947, *ITOP*, X/162, pp. 286–287; Minutes of the Second Day of the First Governor's Conference, 16 April 1947, *ITOP*, X/158, p. 277; Minutes of the Viceroy's Fourth Miscellaneous Meeting (Situation in the N.W.F.P.), 18 April 1947, *ITOP*, X/171, pp. 315–319.

⁴¹ Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins, *Freedom at Midnight* (Noida: Vikas Publishing House, 1997), 176–180; Scott to Abell, 28 April 1947, *ITOP*, X/247, pp. 476–477.

Mountbatten's trip to the NWFP and Punjab convinced him that a unified India was beyond hope and that a partition was necessary. By delaying the transfer of power, Mountbatten ran the risk of a complete breakdown of authority and the possibility of unleashing the communal violence similar to that in the NWFP upon the rest of the subcontinent. At this point, Mountbatten declared the Cabinet Mission's proposed solution dead and presented V.P Menon's suggestion of partition granted both successor states remained in the Commonwealth. Knowing that Pakistan would not secede from the Commonwealth gave Mountbatten leverage to force Congress to accept Dominion status and to accept it sooner than the June 1948 deadline. The decision was a win-win for all sides (short of a united India); Britain could abdicate its responsibilities earlier than projected, both India and Pakistan would attain their independence sooner, and both would remain in the Commonwealth. While remaining in the Commonwealth was not the desired end state for India, it was necessary if it was to maintain military parity with Pakistan and recoup its war debt from Britain.⁴²

Once the decision to partition had been made, the disposition of the NWFP had to be determined. Intuitively, Mountbatten knew that the Province should go to Pakistan, but he did not want to leave that decision in the hands of the provincial government. As a means of appeasing Nehru on the probable loss of the Province, Mountbatten included a plebiscite into the overall independence plan on whether or not the NWFP would belong to Pakistan or India. Once Mountbatten secured the referendum for the NWFP, he

⁴² Minutes of the Viceroy's Ninth Miscellaneous Meeting, 1 May 1947, *TP*, X/162, pp. 286–287; Viceroy's Personal Report No. 14, 25 July 1947, *TP*, XII/228, pp. 333–334; Roberts, 2003, 93-94.

changed the partition plan to disallow the independence option; the choice was either Pakistan or India. Mountbatten justified his decision by stating “I do not consider that the Frontier Province should be given the option of remaining independent since obviously it could not possibly stand by itself.” Caroe concurred, noting, “I agree that option for Frontier province is out of the question, as such suggestion apart from other considerations would stimulate ideas of Afghan irredentism.” Ultimately, Mountbatten convinced the home office that the independence option was not a good idea, and announced the decision in a press conference: “After discussing this particular point with the leaders of both the parties I [Mountbatten] find that the leaders do not wish to have any other option than to join one or the other of the constituent assemblies for the good and sufficient reason that they do not wish this plan to encourage what I might call “Balkanization.”⁴³

⁴³ Minutes of the First Day of the First Governors’ Conference, 15 April 1947, *TpP*, X/147, p. 253; Minutes of the Viceroy’s Third Miscellaneous Meeting (Situation in the NWFP), 16 April 1947, *TP*, X/162, pp. 291–292; Mountbatten to Ismay, 3 May 1947, *ITOP*, X/ 300, p. 599; Mountbatten to Ismay, 5 May 1947, *ITOP*, X/317, p. 622; Minutes of the Viceroy’s Tenth Miscellaneous Meeting, 8 May 1947, *TP*, X/350, pp. 672–673; Record of Interview between Mountbatten and Nehru, 22 April 1947, *TP*, X/193, p. 362; Minutes of the Viceroy’s Fourth Miscellaneous Meeting (Situation in the NWFP), 18 April 1947, *TP*, X/171, p. 318; Minutes of the Viceroy’s Thirty-First Staff Meeting, 12 May 1947, *ITOP*, X/414, p. 781; Mountbatten to Ismay, 13 May 1947, *ITOP*, X/429, p. 807;

Chapter Ten

Strategic Implications of Partition

Once the decision to partition had been made, the Chiefs of Staff had to reconsider the strategic implications of a divided India. Mountbatten envisioned India and Pakistan maintaining one army, but that issue was a non starter for Jinnah.

Acknowledging that a divided India “has affected the position of the Indian Continent in respect to war and to all questions of defense”, the strategic implications and expectations of both new successor states remained. Mountbatten and the Chiefs hoped that the two successor states would “accept the obligation to participate actively in the defense of India in the event of a threat developing in any of the neighboring territories, including the possibility that this might entail employment of some of their forces outside their own territories.” Many officials also viewed this period as an opportune time to cement a strategic partnership between the new Commonwealth states and Afghanistan while the Afghan leadership was still on good terms with Britain. Once the partition was complete, the focus naturally turned inward towards internal security issues of the successor states, and immediate planning on frontier related issues was sidelined based on the assumption that strategic security issues remained unchanged. It was thought that the successor states would restart the strategic dialog with Afghanistan once the partition was complete, but

communal violence and enmity between the newly created Pakistan and India insured that those talks would never happen.⁴⁴

The ramifications of the partition on the strategic partnership of Afghanistan and Pakistan were immediate and long lasting. Afghanistan reiterated its claim to the tribal areas, stating that their treaty obligations were with Britain and not the successor states. As such, Afghanistan wanted to absorb the tribal areas and barring that, advocated for an independent “Pushtunistan” which would naturally fall into its sphere of influence. Both Britain and Pakistan denied these claims and Britain insisted that its treaty obligations were transferred to the successor states. The importance of this statement had to do with the transfer of treaty obligations relating to the Pashtuns and Afghanistan that transferred to Pakistan. The League initially refused to honor these treaty obligations, but Mountbatten impressed upon Jinnah the need to keep the frontier quiet and dissuade Afghan irredentism.⁴⁵

On 30 July, 1947, Jinnah affirmed Pakistan’s commitment to honor all previous arrangements with the Pashtuns and declared that the traditional regional autonomy that the region had operated under during British rule would continue. Jinnah also expressed “every intention and desire to have most friendly relations with the Government of Afghanistan.” Unfortunately for the relationship between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the

⁴⁴ Roberts, 2003, pp. 74-75, and endnotes 27-30; Listowel to Attlee, Enclosures 1 and 2, India-Defense Requirements, 24 July 1947, TP XI/219, pp. 319-321; Record of Meeting between Ismay, Caroe, Weightman, et al., 14 April 1947, TP, X/1.

⁴⁵ Mountbatten to Listowel, 2 July 1947, TP XI/463, pp. 832; Cabinet, India and Burma Committee, I.B. (47) 40th Meeting, 3 July 1947, TP XI/486, pp.870-71; Listowel to Mountbatten, 5 July 1947, TP XI/517, pp. 910; External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations Department to Squire, 5 August 1947, TP XII/350, pp. 543.

tribes, none of Jinnah's declarations would last. In 1955 Pakistan merged the NWFP (including the tribal areas) into West Pakistan and declared it an integral part of country while failing to extend the same legal protection afforded to every other Pakistani citizen. Rather than autonomy, the region received neglect. With respect to Pakistan-Afghan relations, these went sour due to Afghanistan continued Pushtunistan propaganda and Pakistan's refusal to sell arms to the Afghan government under previous British agreements. With Britain withdrawing from the subcontinent and Pakistan squared off against India in Kashmir, Afghanistan was left to provide its own protection without the benefit of outside military assistance.⁴⁶ Anxious to fill those void, subsequent Afghan governments sought assistance first from the United States and finally with the Soviet Union. The aid package Kabul accepted from Moscow finally allowed Soviet influence firmly into Afghan politics and would eventually lead to the loss of Afghan independence.

⁴⁶ Roberts, 2003, pp. 120-125; Khan, T, 2008, pp. 57-59

Chapter Eleven

The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and its impact on the Frontier

On November 4, 1979, Iranian militants stormed the United States Embassy in Tehran and took forty-nine Americans captive and threatened to kill them if any attempt was made to rescue them. On November 20, 1979 armed Islamist dissidents took over the Al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest place in Islam. On November 21, 1979 a group of hardcore Islamist students rioted and took over the US embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. And in March, 1979 an Afghan army captain named Ismail Khan led his heavily armed Herat garrison into revolt, killing more than a dozen Russian communist political advisors. 1979 was a watershed year for radical Islam as followers called for an Islamic revolution against the superpowers.⁴⁷ However, the situation in Afghanistan became an international conflict when Soviet armed forces invaded Afghanistan to prop up the communist government they had installed and to put down the uprising of Islamist militants. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to a war that lasted ten years, drew in both superpowers and set the conditions for anarchy in two countries.

The prospect of Soviet invasion can be traced back to Afghanistan Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud Khan's acceptance of Soviet military assistance in 1956. Between 1956 and 1972, Afghanistan received nearly half a billion dollars worth of military aid from the Soviets. Throughout this period, Afghanistan became heavily dependent on the Soviets for not only military hardware and training, but economic assistance as well. Also

⁴⁷ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 22-27

during this time, the opposition People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) grew considerably, but split in 1967 into two rival factions. The Khalq (Masses) faction was headed by Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin and the Parcham (Flag) faction led by Babrak Karmal. On July 17, 1973 Daoud staged a military coup and ousted the King's government. Daoud's tenure was marked by incompetence and suppression of the PDPA. On April 27, 1978, the PDPA sympathetic officers in the Afghan army overthrew Daoud's government and killed him and members of his family. The army officers turned control of the government over to Nur Muhammad Taraki. With Taraki as President and Amin in charge of internal security, the Khalq faction eliminated the Parcham faction as political rivals and subsequently drove the people to rebellion through the imposition of economic and social reforms that conflicted with either Islam or Afghan tradition.⁴⁸

“Insurgencies arose against the government among both tribal and urban groups, and all of these—known collectively as the mujahedeen (Arabic mujāhidūn, “those who engage in jihad”)—were Islamic in orientation.”⁴⁹

The aim of the Soviet invasion was ostensibly to prop up their communist backed government under Karmal, but when he failed to garner significant popular support, the war took on a new dimension. The rebellion grew, spreading to all parts of the country and even into Pakistan. The Afghan army proved incapable of suppressing the insurgency on its own, and the war became ever increasingly Soviet led and executed. The

⁴⁸ Roberts, 2003, pp 211-214

⁴⁹ "Soviet invasion of Afghanistan." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 01 Dec. 2010 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1499983/Soviet-invasion-of-Afghanistan>>.

mujahedeen could not stand toe to toe with conventional Soviet forces and after numerous defeats, the conventional aspect disappeared and a protracted guerilla war began. When it became clear that the mujahedeen could actually hold out against the Soviets, the US decided to begin supplying them with military equipment through Pakistan. The entry of the CIA into the war marked the beginning of the modern US-Pakistani partnership, complete with intrigue and double dealing.

When the Soviets took the fight to the countryside, a mass exodus to the Pakistani border region began in earnest. By 1982 some 2.8 million Afghans had sought asylum in Pakistan and countless refugee camps sprang up in the tribal areas. As a counter to the Soviet's increase in air power, the CIA funneled handheld Stinger missiles to the Mujahedeen through the Pakistani ISI and a grinding war of attrition began. Though widely dispersed and politically fragmented, the mujahedeen began to achieve military success in the field under various commanders, especially once the quality and quantity of arms improved. As the war dragged on, it became a magnet for foreign jihadis, and the Pakistani frontier became their training ground.⁵⁰

By the mid-1980s, the CIA and Saudi Arabia were pumping millions of dollars through the ISI to outfit the mujahedeen. By early 1986, ISI Brigadier General Yousaf had established a large and elaborate network of guerilla training camps along the Af-Pak border and instituted a formalized training program for new recruits. By 1986, these

⁵⁰ "Soviet invasion of Afghanistan." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 01 Dec. 2010 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1499983/Soviet-invasion-of-Afghanistan>>; Coll, 2004, Part One, Blood Brothers: November 1979 to February 1989.

camps were training thousands of fighters in the art of guerilla warfare. However, the message began to shift from the cause of Afghan freedom to a more ambitious radical Islamist goal of toppling antireligious and corrupt governments. During this time of increased funding and Islamic radicalization, the Frontier became a staging ground for Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and the Taliban and the both the CIA and the ISI began to lose control of their proxy warriors.⁵¹

The withdrawal of Soviet troops in February of 1998 did not bring peace to Afghanistan. Najibullah's communist government continued to hold out against Afghan rebel forces until April 1992 when Kabul fell and to two competing warlords; Ahmed Shah Massoud and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The country fell into civil war until the Taliban took Kabul in 1996 and then chased the remaining combatants from the field in 1997. Initially seen as saviors for bringing law and order to Afghanistan, the Taliban's harsh policies repeated the recurring pattern of alienating the population and fomenting dissent. Afghanistan under the Taliban also became a refuge for Islamic extremists, including bin Laden and al-Qaeda to which the regime provided tacit support. While the US was willing to turn a blind eye to the harsh measures the Taliban imposed on the Afghani people, it was unwilling to allow the regime to harbor Bin Laden after that 9/11 terrorist attacks.⁵²

⁵¹ Coll, 2004, Part One, Blood Brothers: November 1979 to February 1989; Roberts, 2003, pp. 231; Khan, T, 2008, pp. 62-63.

⁵² Ibid.

Chapter Twelve

Invasion, Insurgency and Cooperation

When the US determined that Bin Laden was responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush delivered a non-negotiable ultimatum to the Taliban:

1. Deliver Al-Qaida leaders located in Afghanistan to the United States
2. Release all imprisoned foreign nationals, including American citizens
3. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country
4. Close terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and "hand over every terrorist and every person and their support structure to appropriate authorities".
5. Give the US full access to terrorist training camps to verify their closure

When these demands were not met, US led coalition forces invaded Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 and overthrew the Taliban regime. Unfortunately, the Taliban leader Mullah Omar, along with a large portion of his upper leadership managed to escape along with Bin Laden over the border into Pakistan. From safe havens within the Pakistan Frontier, the Taliban has successfully launched an insurgency against Afghan and coalition forces inside Afghanistan and against Pakistani forces inside the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as the NWFP).⁵³

The Pakistan's history of manipulating various rebel groups on the Frontier dates back to shortly after Partition when the Pathans were used to spearhead the attack into Kashmir. However, since the mid-1950s, Pakistan invested very little in the infrastructure and economic development of the Frontier, and seemed content to continue the British

⁵³ "US Invasion of Afghanistan", 2010, http://www.fact-index.com/u/_u_s_invasion_of_afghanistan.html

tradition of semi autonomy. Not until General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq embarked on his mission to spread conservative Islam throughout the country was much interest given to integrating the region into the social fabric of Pakistani governance. Beginning in the 1970s, the Pakistani government began building thousands of conservative madrassas in the Pashtun areas with the help of Saudi funding. The intent was to empower the mullahs politically at the expense of the tribal elders, khans, and maliks. This cultural engineering was not likely to rapidly supplant the time tested Pathan tribal structure without some sort of major social upheaval. That event occurred when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. The result of the invasion was the death of approximately one million Pashtuns, creating a massive refugee population and devastating the social fabric of tribal society.⁵⁴ The Pakistani response to this upheaval and its partnership with the US in the covert fight against the Soviets is what ultimately led to Pakistan losing control of the Frontier.

The Soviet –Afghan war saw the ISI take the lead in harboring, equipping and training the mujahedeen throughout the Soviet occupation. Through the influx of foreign fighters and the radicalization of the tribal areas, the Pakistani government eventually lost control of the region and is now faced with the same situation confronting Coalition forces across the border in Afghanistan. Pakistan now finds itself with an insurgency it cannot contain, much less suppress regardless of how many troops are sent in. Since 2002, Pakistan has launched numerous military operations into the Frontier, with more

⁵⁴ Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier”, *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008): 70

than a few into areas that have never seen Pakistani military units. These operations have met with mixed success, but without the ability to establish control over remote areas, the insurgents retreat into the hinterland and wait for the army to leave. Negotiations with the Taliban in the Swat and South Waziristan have proven to be short lived and ineffective and the army ends up going into the area to displace the extremists. Meanwhile, the ongoing radicalization of the region and the Pakistani government's inability to deny refuge to the Taliban and foreign fighters has earned the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) of Pakistan the distinction of being named one of the world's most dangerous areas.⁵⁵

As the US-Pakistan partnership continues out of necessity, it is imperative that the two governments work together towards their common goal of regional stability. Clearly what has been tried to date has been unsuccessful at suppressing the insurgency on both sides of the Af-Pak border. The US is in the process of implementing a different approach to counterinsurgency based loosely on the techniques used in Iraq. Realizing that a purely military approach has not and will not work in Afghanistan, the emphasis is on a comprehensive strategy that seeks to harness key elements of US national power. The integration of development, security, infrastructure and public diplomacy in conjunction with military operations is the key to any hope of lasting success. Currently, this concept is centered on the Provincial Reconstruction Team model and is also being adopted by the Pakistan government on the Frontier. In an effort to combat the problem

⁵⁵ US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 110th Congress, May 20, 2008; Khan, T, 2008, pp. 63-66.

simultaneously on both sides of the border, U.S. and Pakistani officials are coordinating their efforts in the hopes of successfully denying refuge for the militants. Pakistan is infinitely more difficult than Afghanistan because more of its people view America as the enemy, its army is fixated on India, and civil control of the military is tenuous at best. Also, it is not practical to place western soldiers inside the country where even Pakistani soldiers are eyed with suspicion. Success will only be realized when conditions persuade the Pashtuns that it is in their best interest to deny refuge to the insurgents. Until those conditions are created, the tribes of the Frontier will continue to cooperate with whatever side offers the best deal.

Conclusion

The British never resolved the issue of what to do with the tribal areas and their frontier problems were inherited by Pakistan after Partition. Although Pakistan absorbed the frontier areas into the administrative structure, the government continued the British practice of semi autonomy and paid little attention to the region as long as the tribes remained relatively peaceful. By diverting much needed resources away from civilian development in an arms race with India, Pakistan neglected to make the necessary investment in the economic development of the tribal areas. Pakistan's continuous efforts to thwart Indian hegemony in the region have also cost it numerous opportunities to form a lasting alliance with Afghanistan and put to rest Afghan claims to the Pakistan tribal areas.

When warfare erupted across the border in Afghanistan, Pakistan was ill prepared for the fallout. While providing a staging base for rebel forces in Afghanistan and simultaneously dealing with a massive humanitarian crisis caused by approximately three million refugees crossing its border, Pakistan failed to identify the growing radicalization of the Frontier. As a result, the Frontier region became a safe haven for displaced Taliban and al-Qaeda militants following the US led invasion of Afghanistan. As of June 2010, the Afghan war became the longest in US history, surpassing the war in Vietnam. While this milestone in and of itself is rather grim, the effect of the war on the stability of Pakistan is just as disturbing. Pakistan's inability to contain a growing insurgency on their side of the border is having a direct impact on U.S. efforts to combat the insurgency

inside Afghanistan. Like Afghanistan, the FATA is a long term challenge that will only be resolved through a combined U.S.-Pakistan development program that will create conditions that are non-conducive to lawless and radicalism. Whether the U.S., NATO and Pakistan can harness the cultural understanding, diplomatic skills and political will to accomplish such a long process remains to be seen. Failure for the U.S. in Afghanistan will result in the redeployment of troops stateside. Failure for Pakistan bears a much steeper price and could ultimately lead to the disintegration of the nation-state.

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